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DOSSIER THE AFTERMATH OF 1965: AN INDONESIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

In October 2016, Goethe University (Frankfurt) organized an international conference entitled “Reconciling Indonesian History with 1965: Facts, Rumors and Stigma.”³ The idea of this three-day event went back even further, a year earlier at Nieuwe Kerk (The Hague) where the International People’s Tribunal on 1965 (IPT 1965) was held from November 10 to 13, 2015. During the trial, several scholars—Bradley Simpson, Asvi Warman Adam, Saskia Wieringa, Wijaya Herlambang—testified as experts. They met in the corridors with colleagues, exchanged gazes during the hearings, astonished as they listened to the story they thought they knew, and about which they were surprisingly still learning: the 1965-1966 events.

The IPT—an Indonesian initiative supported by the diaspora in the Netherlands, their friends and colleagues—elicited a series of reactions in Indonesia. Several significant incidents occurred in 2015. In October, Bali’s Ubud Writers’ and Readers’ Festival was forced to cancel events related to 1965. The same month, *Lentera*, a student journal from Satya Wacana Christian University, published an issue on 1965-1966 entitled “Salatiga Kota Merah,” which was banned. This violation of the freedom of speech was followed by a declaration at the highest level touting the imminent threat

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3. See Rémy Madinier, “Reconciling Indonesian History with 1965: Facts, Rumours and Stigma,” *Archipel* 93, 2017, p. 11-13.

supposedly posed by communism. Books were seized in publishing houses, and the press reported incidents which could almost make one smile had they not been taken seriously. Among others, plastic toy soldiers made in China, bearing the hammer and sickle on a flag, were withdrawn from a shop in Yogyakarta as they were considered propaganda pieces.

The 2016 conference in Frankfurt was organized to discuss in an academic setting what had been heard at the IPT as well as the events it had triggered. A majority of the participants came from Indonesia in a context that was far from appeased, but with the same will to academically discuss the impact of 1965-1966 fifty years later. The present dossier comes out of these discussions and reflects the state of Indonesian scholarship on the question, which tends to focus on the impact of 1965-66 for the present generation. The papers deal with topics as different as land issues, higher education and historiography, but beyond that address related global themes that are central to acquire an understanding of 1965-1966 within a larger time frame: the power of rumors, the long-term impact on several sectors of Indonesian society and the truncated memory passed on to the new generations.

The article by Asvi Warman Adam addresses these three issues by presenting his overview of the last 50 years of historiography on the topic, in which rumors form a large part of the sources and have had an impact on Indonesians' perception of their past. Asvi Warman Adam describes an evolution in the content of history books and concludes on a positive note about the dynamism of studies on 1965-1966. He identifies five periods which can be differentiated through the orientations and content of publications. Whereas the first two periods—debate and instauration of an official narrative—have occupied more than three decades, the last 15 years have already been marked by three historiographical “turns,” from the freeing up of speech with victims' testimonials to ground-breaking studies based on new data, and the two documentaries by Joshua Oppenheimer. According to Asvi Warman Adam, these films, which give pride of place to the perpetrators, marked the beginning of a fifth phase in Indonesian historiography on 1965-1966, one that urges scholars—and especially Indonesians—to produce, and more importantly disseminate, their studies.

The impact of September 30 on Indonesian society had been extremely important, impacting all sectors, and studies had been conducted before Oppenheimer's movie, but they have remained largely external to academia in Indonesia. The article by Abdul Wahid offers a window on the academic world in the 1960s, allowing us to partially understand the paralysis in scholarship. After having depicted the tense political atmosphere on campuses in the 1960s, with the different parties trying to get a hold on education, Abdul Wahid describes the events following September 30: the shutting down of PKI-affiliated campuses, but also the generalized screening-process conducted in all the universities. It led to the dismissal of students, staff members and

professors in the best cases, and to their arrest and execution in the worst. Campuses were transformed, afterward, into a scene where politics was absent. What is striking in his article is the rapidity of the reaction, which invites us to suppose that the university administration was prepared, at least in some places. A second salient element is the varying impact of the screening process which reminds us once again of the importance of local factors in the post-1965-1966 events.

This is precisely what is highlighted in the two contributions on land reform, dealing respectively with villages in East and West Java. Research on the impact 1965 has had on land ownership has been ongoing in Indonesia at least since the 1990s, but was often secluded in NGO circles. The articles by Ahmad Nashih Luthfi and Hilma Safitri illustrate the coming together of scholarship and a certain form of activism, which, as just mentioned, had been wiped out in 1965 and largely kept in check until the end of the New Order. Based on official data from the agrarian agency of Banyuwangi (East Java) and local military archives, Ahmad Nashih Luthfi demonstrates the relation between land reform and violence on two levels. Indeed, the innovation of this study lies in its argument regarding horizontal and vertical violence, which contradicts the commonly accepted version according to which the incidents were provoked only because of land issues between villagers. Using the concept of primitive accumulation, he finally shows that the 1965 event has been used to keep the agrarian sector under the control of both the state and capitalist interests of the New Order.

With the same care for micro-data on land issues, Hilma Safitri presents a study on Indramayu (West Java). Based on a case of contemporary land occupation, she demonstrates that the root of the problem lies in the unfinished land reform of the 1960s. While she describes the methods and arguments used by local authorities between 1965 and the 1980s, to take back the lands which had been distributed before 1965, she also insists on the long-term pattern of abuses related to land opening, exploitation and selling. The interviews she conducted reveal surprising similarity in the *modus operandi* since the Japanese period, calling for an extension to the time frame of such studies.

In the last few months, four books have been published on 1965 and its legacies.⁴ This dossier is part of the renewal of interest in 1965 in academia and aims at underlining the part that Indonesian scholars play in the rewriting of their own history. Half a century after the event, with easier access to archives

4. Soe Tjen Marching, *The End of Silence. Accounts of the 1965 Genocide in Indonesia*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017; Geoffrey B. Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965-66*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018; Jess Melvin, *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide: Mechanics of Mass Murder*, New-York: Routledge, 2018; Katharine McGregor, Annie Pohlman & Jess Melvin (eds.), *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965. Causes, Dynamics and Legacies*, New-York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

and people willing to talk about their past experience, this dossier invites us to look at the events of 1965-1966, and more generally at attitudes regarding communist ideology, from a contemporary and an Indonesian perspective. The four authors' contributions show that the debate is far from over on the question, and that it can unfold in the context of an academic discussion, accessible to the public.

List of Abbreviations mentioned in the dossier

ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia)
Aksef	Aksi Sefihak (Unilateral action)
AKBP	Ajun Komisaris Besar Polisi (Police Adjutant Chief Commissioner)
AURI	Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia (Air Force of the Republic of Indonesia)
BKS	Badan Koordinasi Siaga (Vigilance Coordinating Board)
BKKS	Badan Koordinasi Komando Siaga (Vigilance Commando Coordinating Board)
BIN	Badan Intelijen Negara (State Intelligence Agency)
BPJN	Badan Pertahanan Nasional (National Land Office)
BTI	Barisan Tani Indonesia (Peasants' Front of Indonesia)
BUMN	Badan Usaha Milik Negara (State-owned Enterprise)
CGMI	Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (Student Movement of Indonesia Concentration)
Dandim	Komandan Distrik Militer (Military District Major)
DI/TII	Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia (Darul Islam/Islamic Army of Indonesia)
Dirjen	Direktorat Jenderal (General Direction)
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (House of Representatives)
DPR-GR/MPRS	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat – Gotong Royong/Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara (House of Representatives – Gotong Royong/Provisional People's Consultative Congress)
Erfpacht	Erfelijke pacht (Hereditary lease)

G30S	Gerakan 30 September (30th of September Movement)
Gestapu	Gerakan September Tiga Puluh (30th of September Movement)
Gestok	Gerakan Satu Oktober (First of October Movement)
GERWANI	Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Women's Movement of Indonesia)
GG	Government Ground
GMNI	Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia (National Student Movement of Indonesia)
HGU	Hak Guna Usaha (Cultivation Rights Title)
HSI	Himpunan Sardjana Indonesia (Scholars' Association of Indonesia)
HMI	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Muslim Students' Association)
IKAPI	Ikatan Penerbit Indonesia (Publishers' Association of Indonesia)
IKIP	Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (Institute for Teachers and Pedagogy)
IPT	International People's Tribunal
ITB	Institut Teknologi Bandung (Bandung Technology Institute)
KKO	Korps Komando Operasi (Command Operations' Corps)
Kopkamtib	Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban (Command Operation for the Restoration of Security and Order)
Koramil	Komando Rayon Militer (Rayon Military Command)
KOPKAM	Komando Operasi Keamanan (Command Operation for Security)
KOTI	Komando Operasi Tertinggi (High Command Operation)
KTSP	Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (School-based curriculum)
LBH – Bandung	Lembaga Bantuan Hukum – Bandung (Institute for Legal Aid – Bandung)
Lekra	Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (Institute of People's Culture)
LESRI	Lembaga Seni dan Budaya Republik Indonesia (Institute of Art and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia)
MPRS	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara (Provisional People's Consultative Congress)
Manikebu	Manifes Kebudayaan (Cultural Manifesto)

MSI	Masyarakat Sejarawan Indonesia (Society of Indonesian Historians)
Murba	Musyawarah Rakyat Banyak (People's Consultative Party)
NAS-A	Nasionalis dan Agamis (Nationalists and Religious)
Nasakom	Nasionalisme Agama Komunisme (Nationalism, Religion, Communism)
PAPELRADA	Panitia Pelaksana Dwikora Daerah (Organizing Committee for Regional Dwikora)
PBNU	Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama (Executive Board of the Nahdlatul Ulama)
Pemda	Pemerintah daerah (Regional authorities)
PERHIMI	Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia (Students' Association of Indonesia)
Perhutani	Perusahaan Hutan Negara Indonesia (Indonesian State Forestry Company)
Permesta	Piagam Perjuangan Semesta (Charter of Common Struggle)
Perpu	Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang (Government Regulation in Lieu of Law)
Petani	Persatuan Tani Nasional Indonesia (National Union of Peasants of Indonesia)
Pertanu	Pertanian Nahdlatul Ulama (Agrarian Association of the Nahdlatul Ulama)
PGRI	Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia (Teachers' Union of the Republic of Indonesia)
PGRI-NV	Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia Non-Vaksentral (Non-Vakcentral Teachers' Union of the Republic of Indonesia)
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Communist Party of Indonesia)
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia (National Party of Indonesia)
PNS	Petani Nasionalis Indonesia (Nationalist Peasants of Indonesia)
POM	Polisi Militer (Military Police)
PP	Peraturan Pemerintah (Government Regulations)
PP AURI	Persatuan Purnawirawan Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia (Association of the Air Force Pensioners of the Republic of Indonesia)
PPN	Perusahaan Perkebunan Negara (State-owned estates)

PRRI	Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia)
PTIP	Perguruan Tinggi dan Ilmu Pengetahuan (Higher Education and Sciences)
Puterpra	Perwira Urusan Teritorial dan Perlawanan Rakyat (Territorial Affairs and People's Resistance Officer)
RPKAD	Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat (Land Army Commando Regiment)
SK KINAG	SK Kantor Inspeksi Agraria (Agrarian Affairs Decree)
SK	Surat Keputusan (Decree)
SPGN	Sekolah Pendidikan Guru Negeri (Teacher-Training School)
SSP	Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret (Order of March the Eleventh)
Tap MPRS	Ketetapan Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara (Resolution of the Provisional People's Consultative Congress)
Tapol	Tahanan Politik (Political prisoner)
TNI-AD	Tentara Negara Indonesia – Angkatan Darat (Armed Forces of Indonesia – Land Army)
TOL	Tanah Obyek Land reform (Liable Land for Land reform)
UI	Universitas Indonesia (University of Indonesia)
UGM	Universitas Gadjah Mada (Gadjah Mada University)
UNRA	Universitas Rakjat (People's University)
URECA	Universitas Res Publica (Res Publica University)
USDEK	Undang-undang Dasar 1945, Sosialisme Indonesia, Demokrasi Terpimpin, Ekonomi Terpimpin, dan Kepribadian Indonesia (1945 Constitution, Socialism of Indonesia, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, and Identity of Indonesia)
UU	Undang-Undang (Law)
UUPA	Undang-Undang Pokok-pokok Agraria (Basic Agrarian Laws)
UUPBH	Undang-Undang Perjanjian Bagi Hasil (Outcome Sharing Agreement Laws)

